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A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. Vol. IV. 1798-1815. By Edward Channing. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1917. Pp. 575. \$2.75.

The fourth volume of Professor Channing's masterly work has just appeared. It takes up the narrative with Washington's first inauguration and brings it down to the end of the War of 1812. The first feature that strikes one about the book is that it makes good literature. No subject is so dry or technical that Professor Channing cannot wring from it some interesting aspects. As an illustration, may be cited the third and fourth chapters of the book, where the author displays Mr. Gladstone's magical touch in dealing with figures. The smooth flowing narrative never fails to attract the reader, whether the subject be the duties on nails and molasses under the tariff of 1789; or Hamilton's intricate scheme for funding the public debt in his first report on the public credit; or, again, the speculations of the Robert Morris syndicate in building lots when Washington City was laid out. One secret of Professor Channing's success is that he never exhausts the possibilities of a subject. What topic could be more attractive than the social life, customs, and habits of the American people at the beginning of our career as an independent nation? Professor McMaster in the first chapter of his *History of the People of the United States* devotes one hundred and two pages to this subject, and leaves us edified but wearied. Dr. Channing rounds out the same topics in twenty-seven pages, and we are eager for more. There are indeed times when we regret that the author has not accorded a fuller treatment to a subject of such importance. Chapter VI, on the Rise of Political Parties, may be cited as an example. So, too, the development of the frontier states. This latter deficiency may, however, be remedied in a subsequent volume. The truth is, Dr. Channing is nothing if he is provincial in treatment. He has the cosmopolitan outlook of an Oxford professor. Even though American interests should suffer in his narrative, he never fails to keep before our attention the European background. The interdependence of nation on nation, of American on European politics, is never forgotten. But scantiness of treatment accorded to a subject never means scantiness of knowledge concerning that subject with Professor Channing. He bears with

such ease his panoply of learning that we are apt to forget how complete it is in all its parts. His acquaintance with historical monographic literature is astonishing, and he cites with the same ease the most recent foreign publication on the X Y Z affair, or the British side of the Jay Treaty, or the last American monograph on Aaron Burr's intrigues and trial. The whole work will be a notable contribution to American historical literature.

— S. L. WARE.

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE GREAT WAR. By Oliver Perry Chitwood. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1917. Pp. xii, 196.

The author promises us at the outset that he "will narrate briefly the direct causes of the European war as they are given in the published documents of the belligerents." These documents, Professor Chitwood assures us, "are abundantly adequate for determining the immediate responsibility of each nation, and apportioning the guilt for this great crime." After enumerating in a preliminary chapter what he calls the indirect causes of the war—the imperialistic policy of the great nations; the balance of power doctrine; the Balkan and Moroccan questions, and the division of Europe into the two hostile camps of the Triple and Dual Alliances, respectively—Dr. Chitwood plunges in *medias res*.

We have carefully followed to the end the author's painstaking analysis of the documents given out by the belligerents, but we cannot agree that Dr. Chitwood has fulfilled his promise of explaining the causes of the war. In his concluding chapter he is forced to acknowledge (page 190) that "the documents as a whole are rather vague," and that "the published correspondence raises many questions which must be answered before the guilt can be properly apportioned." Dr. Chitwood does not solve these questions, nor could he with the help of the diplomatic documents alone. It is indeed a poor diplomat who would permit himself and his country to be convicted out of his own mouth. What, then, caused the Great War? Was it, in the language of the theologians, national greed, hatred, and envy? Surely history will not content herself with this simple explanation of the common depravity of all mankind. Nor should she